

## Book reviews

**Amyloid and Amyloidosis**, Ed. by G. G. Glenner, P. Pinho e Costa and Falcao de Freitas. *Excerpta Medica*, Amsterdam, 1980. Pp. 629. Price U.S. \$109.75.

The problems of amyloid and amyloidosis continue to excite the interest of clinicians, immunologists and pathologists to the extent that three highly successful international symposia have been held since 1967. This volume is the published proceedings of the most recent, which was in September, 1979. The list of participants includes almost everyone who has contributed to the rapid advance in our understanding of the nature of amyloid and its pathogenesis.

It has become increasingly evident that amyloid is not a single material, the uniformity of its behaviour by which it is characterized resulting from its curious and specific conformation, namely in the form of fibrils composed of proteins arranged in  $\beta$ -pleated sheets, hence the synonym 'the  $\beta$  fibrilloses' suggested by Glenner. At least three distinct proteins have now been identified in different varieties of amyloidosis, immunoglobulin light chains in so called primary amyloidosis, serum amyloid A protein in the secondary varieties and serum pre-albumin in the Portuguese polyneuropathy. It would appear from many of the contributions that many and diverse proteins are amyloidogenic in so far as given the appropriate environment and proteolytic cleavage they can aggregate in the form of fine fibrils in  $\beta$ -pleated sheet conformation. It is perhaps salutary to recall that almost fifty years ago Astbury showed that a globular protein, such as arachin, could after denaturation be extruded in fibre form, spun and woven into cloth.

The full contributions and edited discussions are presented in this volume and provide an invaluable record of the state of our knowledge of amyloid at the end of 1979. The large number of half-tone illustrations are of high quality and the provision of an adequate index, unusual in symposium proceedings, adds further to the value of the book as a source of reference. It is warmly recommended, but unfortunately few in this country can afford the price.

L. E. GLYNN

**Gradwohl's Clinical Laboratory Methods and Diagnosis**, 8th Edn, Ed. by A. C. Sonnenwirth and L. Jarett. C. V. Mosby. Pp. 2339. Price £85.00

This new edition of the well known multi-disciplinary book on Clinical Laboratory Methods is an impressive two-volume book, which must be recommended to all Pathology Departments. For the enormous effort to update a book of this complexity the Editors can be justly proud. Illustrations are excellent and the text and references for all disciplines embrace most of the advances which have taken place during the last decade. Sixty five contributors, sixty-three of whom are from the United States, cover the whole range of laboratory investigations likely to be requested. Immunologists are well catered for with 146 pages devoted to immunohaematology and tissue typing and another 100 pages to cover the assessment of immunoglobulins, complement, cell-mediated immunology and tumour-associated antigens. All methods are given in adequate detail and the results clearly and liberally presented by line diagrams and half-tones. All in all a worthy successor in the Gradwohl tradition.

C. A. READING

L. E. GLYNN

**Diagnosis and Treatment of Immunodeficiency Diseases**, G. L. Asherson and A. D. B. Webster. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, 1980. Pp. 370. Price £25.

This book is an outstanding and detailed source of information and references about the rare monogenic primary immunodeficiencies, which will be very valuable to academic immunologists who know too little of them and the lessons they teach. Particularly good is the account of the very exciting advance in defects of purine enzymes and the role of T/B interaction in the pathogenesis of hypogammaglobulinaemia. The scepticism on immunodeficiency and cancer is much needed and rational. The description of individual patients adds life and a feeling of reality. But unfor-